

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY ATHENS PRIORITY
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AMEMBASSY DUBLIN PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY MADRID PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA PRIORITY
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AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY
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AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY BONN PRIORITY
AMCONSUL MUNICH PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY SOFIA PRIORITY
INFO AMEMBASSY WARSAW
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AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
AMEMBASSY BERLIN

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 114513

ONDON FOR JOSEPH GODSON

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SCUL, PINT, IT UR

SUBJECT: RFE/RL ACCREDITATION AT OLYMPIC GAMES

SUMMARY: ON MAY 17, THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEE WILL MEET IN ATHENS. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT A BULGARIAN PROPOSAL TO CHANGE IOC RULES WHICH WOULD EFFECTIVELY BAR RFE/RL FROM COVERING THE 1980 OLYMPICS WILL BE ON AGENDA. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF IOC CONSISTS OF FOLLOWING: LORD KILLANIN OF IRELAND, IOC PRESIDENT, JUAN ANTONIO SAMARANCH OF SPAIN, FIRST VICE PRESIDENT, MAJOR SYLVIO DE MAGALHAES PADILHA OF BRAZIL, SECOND VICE PRESIDENT, MOHAMED MZALI OF TUNISIA, THIRD VICE PRESIDENT, VITALY SMIRNOV, IOC MEMBER FOR THE SOVIET UNION, JAMES WORRALL, IOC MEMBER FOR CANADA, ARPAD CSANADI, IOC MEMBER FOR HUNGARY, MASAJI KIYOKAWA, IOC MEMBER FOR JAPAN, COMTE JEAN DE BEAUMONT, IOC MEMBER FOR FRANCE. MONIQUE BERLIOUX IS THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY LOCATED IN LAUSANNE.

1. RFE/RL COVERAGE OF OLYMPIC GAMES HAS HAD A SOMEWHAT CHECKERED HISTORY. RFE HAS COVERED OLYMPIC GAMES SINCE 1952 IN HELSINKI. THE ONLY EXCEPTION WAS TOKYO IN 1964
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BECAUSE OF BUDGETARY CONSIDERATION. RL HAS FURNISHED

SOME OLYMPIC REPORTING SINCE 1960. RFE'S AND RL'S RIGHT TO COVER WAS CHALLENGED FOR THE FIRST TIME AT THE MUNICH OLYMPICS IN 1972. USSR AND EE REPRESENTATIVES RAISED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE PRESENCE OF RFE AND RL PERSONNEL COVERING THE GAMES. HOWEVER, CREDENTIALS WERE OBTAINED IN THE NORMAL WAY.

2. THE FIRST AND ONLY INSTANCE IN WHICH RFE CREDENTIALS WERE DENIED OR REVOKED OCCURRED AT INNSBRUCK IN WINTER 1976, ACTUALLY AFTER THEIR ISSUANCE. UPON USSR AND EE REPRESENTATIVES' INSISTENCE THAT THERE WAS A TECHNICAL VIOLATION OF THE ACCREDITING PROCEDURES, THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE IOC WITHDREW RFE/RL'S REPORTERS' ACCREDITATION. THE DEPARTMENT AND SECRETARY KISSINGER PERSONALLY TOOK ALL POSSIBLE STEPS TO REVERSE THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE'S DECISION BUT TIME HAD RUN OUT. A FEW MONTHS LATER, AT THE MONTREAL GAMES, HOWEVER, THE ISSUE OF ACCREDITATION CAME BEFORE THE FULL IOC AND RFE/RL'S RIGHT TO CREDENTIALS WAS UPHELD ON A VOTE OF 42 TO 21. RFE/RL COVERED MONTREAL GAMES WITHOUT THE

SLIGHTEST INCIDENT. PRIOR TO THE MONTREAL VOTE, THE DEPARTMENT HAD BEEN IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH ONE OF THE TWO AMERICAN REPRESENTATIVES ON THE IOC, MR. DOUGLAS ROBEY, THROUGH DEPUTY UNDERSECRETARY EAGLEBURGER AND OTHERS. ROBEY'S EFFORT, AS WELL AS THE ACTIVITIES BY OUR CONSULATE IN MONTREAL, WERE UNDOUBTEDLY HELPFUL IN OBTAINING THE 42:21 VOTE.

3. DURING THE LAST YEAR, SOVIET AND EAST EUROPEAN MEDIA AND OFFICIAL STATEMENTS HAVE HINTED AT MEASURES, INCLUDING POSSIBLE CHANGES IN THE IOC RULES, TO BE INTRODUCED AT THE NEXT IOC MEETING WHICH WOULD DENY RFE/RL COVERAGE AT THE OLYMPIC GAMES. WHILE NO SPECIFIC PROPOSAL HAS YET BEEN INTRODUCED TO BAR RFE/RL FROM

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THE 1980 OLYMPICS, THE POINT BEING MADE IS THAT ONLY THOSE MEDIA SHOULD BE ACCREDITED WHICH BROADCAST IN THEIR NATIVE LANGUAGE FROM THEIR HOME TERRITORY. ALTHOUGH THE WINTER GAMES IN LAKE PLACID WILL PRECEDE THOSE IN MOSCOW, A RULE CHANGE MADE NOW BY THE IOC COULD BAR RFE/RL FROM LAKE PLACID AS WELL AS MOSCOW.

4. THE CHIEF OPERATING EXECUTIVE OF RFE/RL, ALEXANDER BUCHAN, HAS HAD SEVERAL DISCUSSIONS WITH LORD KILLANIN, PRESIDENT OF IOC AND WILLI DAUME, HEAD OF THE GERMAN OC. BOTH KILLANIN AND DAUME APPEAR TO BE ANXIOUS TO AVOID ANOTHER ARGUMENT AND HAVE INDICATED THAT THEY WILL SEEK TO KEEP A MOTION TO BAR RFE/RL OFF THE AGENDA OF THE ATHENS MAY 17 MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE IOC. IT APPEARS THAT THE BULGARIAN REPRESENTATIVE HAS FILED OR IS FILING SUCH A MOTION TO CHANGE THE RULES AND THUS BAR RFE/RL FROM COVERAGE BUT KILLANIN SAYS HE BELIEVES THAT, IF IT WERE TO COME BEFORE THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE IOC, IT WOULD BE DEFEATED 6:3 -- ONLY THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE USSR, HUNGARY AND TUNISIA WOULD SUPPORT SUCH A MOTION, HE HAS SAID.

5. BUCHAN WILL BE IN THE ATHENS AREA DURING THE IOC MEETING AND WALTER ROBERTS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, BIB, IS WRITING AMBASSADOR MCCLOSKEY SEPARATELY REGARDING BUCHAN'S AVAILABILITY IN CASE OF NEED.

6. DEPARTMENT AND BIB WILL NOTIFY ADDRESSEE POSTS REGARDING FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS AND WHETHER CONTACT, EITHER DIRECTLY OR THROUGH THE GOVERNMENTS CONCERNED, SHOULD BE MADE. PURPOSE OF SUCH CONTACT WOULD BE TO INSURE THAT AS MANY MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AS POSSIBLE STAND FIRM AGAINST RECOMMENDING THE ITEM

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TO BE PLACED ON THE AGENDA OF THE FULL IOC; LATTER WILL
MEET IMMEDIATELY AFTER EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ALSO IN
ATHENS. CHRISTOPHER

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